

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing a multi-device distributed digital video recording system, comprising:
 - broadcasting a request from a requesting digital video recorder (DVR) to a plurality of networked DVRs seeking resources of a dormant DVR;
 - receiving a response from at least one dormant DVR indicating availability of resources;
 - selecting a granting DVR from the dormant DVRs with available resources;
 - establishing a session between said requesting DVR and said granting DVR;
 - providing resources of said granting DVR for use by said requesting DVR.
2. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said resources include at least one of a tuner and a storage device.
3. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein:
 - said resources comprise a tuner of said granting DVR; and
 - control of said tuner is turned over to said requesting DVR.
4. A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:
 - requesting that said granting DVR tune to a particular channel and record designated content from said channel; and
 - storing said designated content at said granting DVR for use by said requesting DVR.
5. A method in accordance with claim 4, wherein said granting DVR does not have access to the particular channel, further comprising:
 - advising the requesting DVR that said access is not available;
 - requesting access to the particular channel by the requesting DVR on behalf of the granting DVR.

6. A method in accordance with claim 4, wherein:
 - a fee is charged to the requesting DVR for the designated content.
7. A method in accordance with claim 4, further comprising:
 - tagging the recorded designated content as being owned by said requesting DVR.
8. A method in accordance with claim 7, further comprising:
 - encrypting the recorded designated content with an encryption key known to said requesting DVR.
9. A method in accordance with claim 8, further comprising:
 - making said encrypted recorded designated content available to said granting DVR.
10. A method in accordance with claim 9, wherein said encrypted designated content is made available to said granting DVR for a fee.
11. A method in accordance with claim 4, further comprising:
 - requesting access to said stored designated content by said requesting DVR; and
 - uploading the stored designated content from the granting DVR to said requesting DVR.
12. A method in accordance with claim 4, further comprising:
 - requesting access to said stored designated content by said requesting DVR; and
 - streaming the stored designated content from the granting DVR to said requesting DVR.
13. A method in accordance with claim 12, further comprising:
 - controlling presentation of said streamed designated content utilizing a command and control channel to send commands from said requesting DVR to said granting DVR.

14. A method in accordance with claim 13, wherein said commands comprise at least one of play, stop, pause, fast forward, rewind, skip, and jump.

15. A method in accordance with claim 4, further comprising:

 automatically forwarding said stored designated content to a storage device at said requesting DVR.

16. A method in accordance with claim 4, further comprising:

 routing said request for resources through a system operator;
 wherein multiple requests for identical designated content from multiple requesting DVRs are handled by a single granting DVR.

17. A multi-device distributed digital video recording system, comprising:

 a plurality of networked digital video recorders;
 a requesting digital video recorder (DVR) capable of broadcasting a request to said plurality of networked DVRs seeking resources of a dormant DVR;
 at least one dormant DVR capable of providing a response to said requesting DVR indicating availability of resources;
 wherein:
 said requesting DVR selects a granting DVR from the dormant DVRs with available resources;
 a session is established between said requesting DVR and said granting DVR;
 and
 resources of said granting DVR are made available for use by said requesting DVR.

18. A system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said resources include at least one of a tuner and a storage device.

19. A system in accordance with claim 17, wherein:

said resources comprise a tuner of said granting DVR; and

control of said tuner is turned over to said requesting DVR.

20. A system in accordance with claim 17, wherein:

said requesting DVR requests that said granting DVR tune to a particular channel and record designated content from said channel; and

said granting DVR stores said designated content for use by said requesting DVR.

21. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:

said granting DVR does not have access to the particular channel;

said granting DVR advising the requesting DVR that said access is not available;

said requesting DVR requests access to the particular channel on behalf of the granting DVR.

22. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:

a fee is charged to the requesting DVR for the designated content.

23. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:

said granting DVR tags the recorded designated content as being owned by said requesting DVR.

24. A system in accordance with claim 23, wherein:

said granting DVR encrypts the recorded designated content with an encryption key known to said requesting DVR.

25. A system in accordance with claim 24, wherein:

said encrypted recorded designated content is made available to said granting DVR.

26. A system in accordance with claim 25, wherein:
said encrypted designated content is made available to said granting DVR for a fee.
27. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:
said requesting DVR requests access to said stored designated content; and
the stored designated content is uploaded from the granting DVR to said requesting DVR.
28. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:
said requesting DVR requests access to said stored designated content; and
the stored designated content is streamed from the granting DVR to said requesting DVR.
29. A system in accordance with claim 28, wherein:
said requesting DVR controls presentation of said streamed designated content
utilizing a command and control channel to send commands to said granting DVR.
30. A system in accordance with claim 29, wherein:
said commands comprise at least one of play, stop, pause, fast forward, rewind, skip,
and jump.
31. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:
said granting DVR automatically forwards said stored designated content to a storage
device at said requesting DVR.
32. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:
said request for resources is routed through a system operator; and

multiple requests for identical designated content from multiple requesting DVRs are handled by a single granting DVR.

33. A digital video recorder (DVR) for use in a multi-device distributed digital video recording system, comprising:

- at least one tuner;

- at least one storage device;

- a processor enabled for at least one of:

- (a) broadcasting a request to a plurality of networked DVRs seeking resources of a dormant DVR;

- receiving a response from at least one dormant DVR indicating availability of resources;

- selecting a granting DVR from the dormant DVRs with available resources;

- establishing a session with said granting DVR; and

- utilizing resources of said granting DVR; and

- (b) receiving a broadcast request from a requesting DVR seeking available resources;

- responding to said requesting DVR regarding availability of resources;

- if resources are available and if selected by said requesting DVR, establishing a session with said requesting DVR; and

- providing resources for use by said requesting DVR.